

# The Newark City COUNCIL MONITOR

APRIL • 1995

## Carrino and Quintana Fight Crime in North Ward



From left to right: Participating in the North Ward Meeting are Councilman Carrino, Councilman Martinez, Councilman Quintana, Councilman Carrino and moderating the meeting Newark Attorney Amilkar Velez-Lopez.

**N**orth Ward Councilman Anthony Carrino and Councilman-at-Large Luis Quintana held a town meeting in early February, in response to a community outcry for action from North Ward merchants and residents to deal with the rising tide of crime.

Held at the Don Miguel Banquet Hall on Bloomfield Avenue, angry residents and merchants packed the hall to express their outrage at what they

describe as a lack of response by Newark Police to repeated incidents of criminal activity. Many complained of a "wave of crime," sweeping over their community. Young and old alike, many Latino and Italian residents and merchants gave graphic, often vivid testimony reciting a litany of crime and gang activity in their neighborhoods, and they demanded that the police respond to their calls for help. Several people who testified at the

meeting vowed that "the people would take the law into their own hands," if the police could not control crime in the North Ward. Residents and merchants also complained in the "highly charged" atmosphere, about the lack of police presence on the streets and main thoroughfares.

Police Director William Celestier, Chief of Police Thomas P. O'Reilly and North

(continued on page 2)

## Tucker Lauds Success of Gun Amnesty/ Buy-Back Program

**C**ouncilman-at-Large Donald Tucker expressed his excitement at the recent success of the City's Gun Amnesty and Buy-Back program. "I'm happy that the program has finally been enacted by the Council," Tucker said. "The funds for the program had been approved back in September 1994, but we weren't able to activate them until early March. We set aside \$50,000 for the

gun purchase program to provide enough incentive for the community to respond in a substantial way and get some of these guns off the streets." The Municipal Council also initiated an aggressive advertising campaign to educate the community about the program. In addition to mailing, we used the local newspapers, and distributed flyers and posters citywide.

(continued on page 7)

### INSIDE

Carrino and Quintana Fight Crime in North Ward	2
Brutality Stamps for Job Training	2
Quintana Chairs Conference on AIDS	3
Martinez Targets False Fire Alarms, Arson and Graffiti at East Side High School	4
Branch Launches Newark Student	4
Crump Responds to Proposed Cuts in Health Delivery Service	5
Councilman Crump Leads LEAD Poisoning Effort	5
Councilman Rios Questions Closing of Newark STD/HIV Center	6
Hearts Speaks Out	6
Tucker Lauds Success of Gun Amnesty/Buy-Back	7
City of Newark Creates Contemporary Club	8

## Bradley Stumps for Job Training

In his continuing efforts to pursue economic empowerment and job training, Council President Donald Bradley who also represents the South Ward recently joined a delegation of officials from the United Community Corporation (U.C.C.) that traveled to the G.M. plant in Linden, to accept a donation of a 1995 Chevrolet Blazer Truck. The truck was donated by the UAW's Local 595 joint management community outreach program and will be utilized in the U.C.C.'s Automotive Training Program.

Bradley joined U.C.C. Executive Director Floyd Melvin and U.C.C. Board Chairman Rev. Willie Simmons and UAW Local 595 officials in a ceremony at the General Motors Truck and Bus Division at the Linden plant to accept the truck which will be used for Training Purposes Only. The Council President in his remarks during the ceremony indicated that the truck will be a much needed boost to the U.C.C. training efforts. Bradley said "our young people need as many resources as we can put at their disposal to train, prepare and qualify them for real jobs in the real world." Although this is a small step in the process of economic empowerment, it is no less important to accept this gift which could very well translate for some young person into a career in automotive mechanics.



Newark Council President Donald Bradley joins representatives from the United Community Corporation (U.C.C.) and the General Motors Truck Manufacturing Plant in Linden, New Jersey during the presentation of a New Chevrolet Blazer to U.C.C. Automotive Training Program. From left to right is Mr. Theotis Taylor, Manager of Automotive Training Program, Reverend Willie Simmons, President of the U.C.C. Trustee Board, Floyd Melvin, Executive Director of U.C.C., Council President Bradley, and Talmadge Fort representing General Motors.

With additional training in business practices an industrious individual will eventually be inspired to open their own business in automotive repair and maintenance. Bradley continued by saying "so, in a real way this truck could actually result in more jobs for the residents here in Newark. What I am saying here is that we must have vision and see the possibilities that exist for empowerment of our citizens." This is a "win, win" situation for all concerned. The UAW local 595 community outreach, the U.C.C., the City of Newark and most importantly

the young people working to better themselves and acquire the skills necessary to be successful and productive members of this society. Perhaps some of these young people will eventually be hired at this very plant that manufactured this truck and made this very generous donation."

"I think it is vitally important for government to partnership with private industry and community agencies to open as many avenues and channels of opportunity to broaden the possibilities for economic empowerment and jobs," Bradley said. ■

## Carrino and Quintana Fight Crime in North Ward

(continued from page 1)

Ward Police Commander Capt. Perry Borrelli, along with West Ward Councilman-State Senator Ronald Rice and East Ward Councilman, Hank Martinez were in attendance to hear the testimony and respond to questions about the crisis.

Councilmen Carrino and Quintana both said that their offices had been flooded with phone calls about the drastic increase in crime along Broadway, Park, Bloomfield and Mt. Prospect Avenues. Recent reports indicated that many merchants have installed buzzers on their doors out of fear of the criminal element. Carrino said what we are trying to establish in answer to the rash of complaints here in the North Ward is more of a police presence.

"You can't stop everything, but at least if people would see the cops,

they would feel more comfortable," Carrino said. Councilman Carrino knows the problem first hand, since his own car was burglarized recently. He continued his thought saying "there is a shortage of police cars...of the 110 cars the City ordered last year, 60 were unmarked, leaving only 55 marked cars for the entire City."

Councilman Quintana added his thoughts on the crime issue citing the frustration of local merchants "it's one thing to get mugged, it's another thing to get beat up even after you give up your money." However, Quintana said, violence is not the answer, referring to the factions advocating a vigilante approach to the problem, who vow to use bats and guns to take on criminals if the police don't provide them with a satisfactory plan. "We must continue to

work to resolve the issue by getting the most out of the police resources and getting more presence and manpower on the streets."

Carrino concluded the meeting by saying, "The citizens must come together and work with the police to devise strategies that will reduce crime through a partnership with the community. When the community comes together with our police department in a non-antagonistic, constructive, reasoned approach we can send a signal to the criminals that the North Ward is not the place for them to do their crime."

Councilmen Carrino and Quintana plan to hold additional town meetings with community groups and the police to establish an effective plan of action to deal with the crime problem. ■

## Quintana Chairs Conference on AIDS

**C**ouncilman-at-Large Luis Quintana, Chairman of the HIV/AIDS Planning Committee, presided over the first public forum and hearing on one of the most devastating health epidemics to affect Newark and this nation. The public hearing on HIV/AIDS, sponsored by the Municipal Council and held in the Council Chambers, brought Newark residents together with medical experts, community organizations and public officials to discuss the myriad of issues surrounding this often misunderstood disease, dispel myths, make recommendations and seek solutions to a medical crisis that ranks New Jersey fifth in the nation with 24,675 reported Aids cases, and Newark at the top of the state list at 4,711 cases reported.

According to panelist Ellen Bay of the Newark Aids Group, Newark bears the brunt of this epidemic and ranks first in the number of women of child bearing age affected by the HIV-AIDS virus, first in the number of cases affecting young people between the ages of 19-24 and first among newborns. And, according to state Assistant Health Commissioner Douglas Morgan, of the 4,700 cases, more than 2,000 are children and 95 percent are African-American and Latinos. Of particular importance Morgan said is "the spread among women and the higher incidence of disease among children and adolescents."

Most revealing about these statistics however, was the raw emotion and sincerity displayed in the testimony of many young people who

expressed alarm at the sexual habits of their peers. Many called for the distribution of condoms to stem the rising tide of HIV infection among the youth in Newark.

HIV/AIDS Planning Committee members Councilman George Branch Central Ward and Ronald Rice - West Ward were in attendance along with

City health administrators and members of the Ryan White Council which administers the City's federal funding. Chairman Quintana characterized the situation as a display of "some kind of disrespect" and vowed that he would inquire as to why those representatives were not present.

One of the key issues endorsed by

audience members at the forum was the proposed legislation sponsored by Senator Lipman that would legalize the distribution of clean needles to drug abusers free of charge. The bill is designed to slow the spread of AIDS and other blood related diseases while providing education and counseling about AIDS and substance abuse treatment. However, critics of the proposed legislation have said



Councilwoman-at-Large Mildred Crump, Senator Wynona Lipman (D-Essex), Senator Ray Lesniak (D-Union), and co-sponsors, El Club del-Barrio-Newark AIDS Group, New Jersey Community Research Institute, Special Audiences, Street Smarts-UMDNJ and the Division of AIDS Education-United Community Corporation. Among the forum panellists were: Mr. Douglas Morgan, Assistant Health Commissioner N.J., Newark Health Department officer, Marsha Gowen, Executive Director of the New Jersey Women & Aids Network, Ms. Marion Banzhaf, Dr. James Oleske and Dr. Robert Johnson, UMDNJ, and Mr. Alan Clear from the Lower East Side Harm Reduction Program (NY). Several members of the audience were critical of the lack of representation of

a publicly run needle exchange program sends the wrong message by placing the government in a position of distributing paraphernalia for illegal drug use.

A host of related issues such as housing, long-term care for AIDS patients, expanded funding sources for AIDS treatment and prevention programs, public assistance and safe sexual practices were addressed by forum participants. Councilman Quintana concluded the forum by vowing to continue to pursue all avenues and resources available and to support the initiatives coming out of this forum to fight this most devastating epidemic affecting our great City.

## Martinez Targets False Fire Alarms, Arson and Graffiti at East Side High School

**E**ast Ward Councilman Henry "Hank" Martinez, at a recent meeting in early April, has joined forces with student leaders at East Side High School and a member of the Board, to stem the tide of false fire alarms, arson and the plague of graffiti at East Side High School.

"The student leadership at East Side High School has indicated to me that they are tired of the rash of false fire alarms and arson which disrupts time spent in the classroom for the majority of students who value and respect the classroom experience." Martinez continued his thought by saying, "When a student pulls a false alarm or starts a fire, this individual who commits these irresponsible acts puts the school at risk and endangers the community-at-large by causing the fire department to waste valuable time, energy and resources." The Councilman went on to say "What is most troubling about this issue is that the Board of Education has no policy to deal effectively with the student offender. However, there is a State statute that specifically views arson and false alarms as criminal acts which are enforceable under the State criminal codes. Further, the County Prosecutor's office has indicated that offenders will face prosecution under the State laws. Board member Charles Bell, who was also in attendance at the meeting with Martinez and student leaders said the Board will review the issue and consider the resolution

drafted by the Student Council which calls for very stiff penalties to deal with this very serious problem in our schools.

The Councilman said according to official fire department statistics there were 308 false alarms reported in Newark schools and from September 1st, 1994 to March 29th, 1995, 72 false alarms occurred at East Side High School. The arson squad arrested 13 student offenders citywide for the same period with four of those arrests made at East Side High School. The County Prosecutor's office has instructed the Newark Fire Department to arrest any student who sets a fire to activate a school alarm system.

The problem with this the Councilman said, is that "these students are arrested, go before a municipal judge, are released and allowed to return to the classroom." "It's a joke," said Martinez. We need tough enforcement like the policy drafted by the East Side Student Council, which ranges from probation and parental supervision for the first offense, to parents paying a fine upwards of \$500.00, to cover the cost of dispatching fire units and sentencing the student to an alternative school, to conviction and sentencing a student offender 18 years and older to a State Correctional facility for a mandatory six months and complete expulsion from the school the student attended. The Councilman has called for a meeting with State Legislators

who represent the district to meet with the students and propose legislation which may include suspension of driving privileges to deal harshly with student offenders.

On the issue of graffiti at East Side High School, the Councilman said it's a severe problem that must be addressed. Again, there is no Board policy to deal with offenders, most of whom are repeat offenders who deface our schools with graffiti. Over the weekend of April 8th, a number of student volunteers at East Side High School painted over graffiti-ridden sections. On Monday, a student was arrested for painting graffiti over the area the volunteer detail had just completed. "These offenders must be sent a strong message that they will pay a severe penalty for defacing public property. These offenders should be facing strong enforcement from suspension to being sentenced to clean up the areas they have defaced." "Already, graffiti damage has cost up to \$160,000 so far this year to clean up," Martinez said that the Board expects to have a policy in place by June to deal with these issues. In the meantime, I will continue to support the Student Council at East Side High School who have "taken the bull by the horns" and established student legislation that will allow them to pursue these issues and create an environment where they can get an education without disruption or danger. ■

## Branch Lauds Newark Student



**C**entral Ward Councilman George Branch has always had a special relationship with the youth of Newark. Through his "Great Achievers Dance Program" and his constant visitations to Central Ward Schools, he has been introduced not only to what bequeagers our youth and the problems of the education system, but he has met some young people who would rate at the top of any scale, as the finest our city has to offer. One such young man is an eighth grade student at Warren Street School

named Elvin Espinol.

Although Elvin will be graduating soon and attending one of the city's magnet schools, he has served as an excellent role model for other students to follow in his footsteps. As one of the top students in his class, "Elvin always has good grades and excellent reports from his teachers," says Blanche Bishop, Principal of Warren Street School; "he also has excellent math skills and he

(continued on page 7)

## Crump Responds to Proposed Cuts in Health Delivery Service

In response to the anticipated cuts in Medicaid for the handicapped and psychiatric patients scheduled by the New Jersey Department of Human Services and the 20% reduction in payments to hospitals treating the poor proposed by the Whitman administration, **Councilwoman Mildred Crump**, Chairwoman of the Newark Municipal Council's Human Services Benefits Committee, convened several meetings with top state health officials and local health and hospital administrators to address the cuts. "I want to get policymakers in here to ask some hard questions revolving around where these patients will go, how will they be transported, and how their basic care needs will be handled," says Councilwoman Crump.

With five of the top ten hospitals



facing the most severe reduction located in Newark, the Councilwoman has formed a coalition with the hospital administration to formulate strategy and action to find a more equitable solution to the current proposal. Noting that the majority of the low paid employees affected by the proposed reduction reside in Newark, the anticipated cuts will increase the strain on the city's overwhelmed Social Service agencies. "Everytime we have dumped people out of institutions without concrete plans, there has been a corresponding rise in social service problems across the board. We need to come up with a proactive approach to changing policy," says Crump. ■

## Councilwoman Crump Leads LEAD Poisoning Effort

**C**ouncilwoman Mildred Crump, affectionately known as "the first lady of the Municipal Council" worked for many years for the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Cognizant of her professional experience,

***"Councilwoman Crump has begun planning a bold and ambitious initiative to eliminate lead poison as a public health issue in Newark by the 21st Century."***

expertise and concerns for health issues, Council President Bradley appointed her chairwoman of the two most important public health

committees, Lead Poisoning and Human Services Benefits.

Bringing new vitality and creativity to the Council, she has initiated a series of public forums on Lead Poisoning to address the problems associated with causes and the prevention of this insidious disease. Citing the irreversibility of lead poisoning and the debilitating effect it has on its victims, she has aggressively targeted prevention as the number one priority.

Councilwoman Crump has begun planning a bold and ambitious initiative to eliminate lead poison as a public health issue in Newark by the 21st Century.

In conjunction with the city Health Department and the Board of Education, she will be sponsoring a rap, poster and essay

contest to increase public awareness among the most susceptible victims, young children. The second phase of this initiative is to spearhead efforts by the city to get funding for private homeowners to begin abating their dwellings.

Her final emphasis will be on the establishment of "The Safe House Program" which will allow temporary residences for families in infected housing, until their units are abated. Councilwoman Crump says she welcomes any suggestions and assistance from any group or individual interested in helping her in this endeavor and urges residents to attend the public forums. The forums are held the second Tuesday of each month in the Newark City Hall Council Conference Room 304 at 4:30 pm. ■

## Councilman Rice Questions Closing of Newark STD/HIV Prevention-Training Center

Newark West Ward Councilman and State Senator Ronald Rice is questioning the apparent closure of a program in the City of Newark that educates professionals and lay residents as to how to avoid and prevent sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection.

After receiving a request to publish something about the program in the Newark Municipal Council Monitor, Councilman Rice was told that the twelve (12) year old program which is internationally known among doctors, but virtually unknown to resident Newarkers was about to close its doors.

The training center was one (1) of eleven (11) centers financed by the Federal Government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, based in Atlanta, Georgia. The Newark

program is a regional training center for seven (7) states: New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts, in addition to New Jersey.

The center's reputation for outstanding lectures, clinical sessions and laboratory workshops has attracted practitioners from around the globe. "The quality of the lectures and the materials used are by far the best I've encountered in years of attendance at work-related educational sessions", said Gail A. Zoerner, Program Development Specialist, STD Control Program, State of New Jersey, Department of Health.

The Center located at 110 William Street in Newark has a full-service STD Clinic that serves 60-80 patients a day. The clinic regularly diagnoses and

treats syphilis, gonorrhea, PID and STDs. The clinic also offers HIV testing and counseling as well as PAP smears. The laboratory routinely performs RPRs, Darkfield microscopy, Gram stains and wet mounts. The close proximity of the Training Center to the STD Clinic, which is not in jeopardy of closing and will continue to serve the Newark community, makes it convenient for participants in the training courses to acquire practical clinical and laboratory experience.

Councilman Rice, who chairs the Newark Municipal Council's Education Committee vows to obtain all relevant data and bring together all parties involved in an effort to keep the program open and to maintain the level of services.

## Harris Speaks Out

Councilman-at-Large Gary Harris continues to maintain his innocence despite the fact that a jury found him guilty on March 28 on charges of conspiracy and extortion involving a fledgling towing company attempting to win a city contract. Harris feels strongly that justice was not done and that the jury wrongfully convicted him despite overwhelming evidence that should have acquitted him of the charges. Although the Councilman will have to resign his seat soon, he plans to fight this conviction through the appeals process.

Harris lamented "Here I was attempting to address citizen complaints regarding towing abuses in the city and working to remedy the situation by alleviating many inconveniences such as the remote locations of the towing yards, theft of parts and overcharges, and I am portrayed as the 'bad guy' in all of this. I never asked for nor accepted a dime from anyone involved in seeking to secure a towing contract, and I never acted in my own self interest in trying to devise a plan to add an

additional towing zone which would locate a towing yard in close proximity to downtown."

"The federal government came into our city and created a criminal atmosphere where no criminal atmosphere existed. They used tens of thousands of our tax dollars and set up a criminal enterprise to entrap unwitting individuals in a scheme to dismantle, discredit the elected leadership and topple the municipal government. We as citizens should take a close look at our system of justice and how it can be used as an instrument to hurt us instead of protecting us."

"Essentially, my actions in this process were twisted to appear criminal when my intentions were clearly to uphold my sworn duty to represent the best interests of the citizens. During the trial, my attorney was able to clearly demonstrate that every key witness that testified on behalf of the government had no credibility, fabricated stories, and admitted they took the money I was accused of receiving. I guess the jury that deliberated was not the same jury that sat in the same courtroom during

those seven arduous weeks. How could they render a guilty verdict when there was overwhelming reasonable doubt that the government had not proven their case? This is beyond me and even the most distant observer of the case."

"As I reflect on my record of accomplishments and achievements as a Councilman, I certainly feel I did the best I could to address the concerns of the citizens of this great city. During my tenure, I tried to represent the best interests of the people of Newark, especially our youth who need so much attention and care. Despite the negative outcome of this case, I think I have left, in my own small way, Newark a better place to live and work. I think the Harris legacy of service, a legacy spanning more than 40 years, to the citizens of Newark will stand the test of time. When the historians write our story, I think they will be able to say that it was a story of strong community activism, and it symbolically represented a beacon of hope helping to light the way to a brighter future for Newark."



## Tucker Lands Success of Gun Amnesty/Buy-Back Program

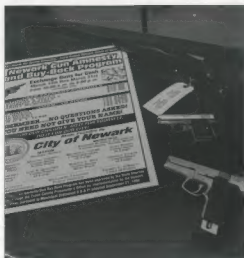
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Unlike other amnesty/buyback programs, this program offered cash for guns instead of tickets to basketball games or merchandise at local stores," Tucker said.

Participants in the program were able to turn in rifles, shotguns, handguns and automatic handguns in any of the four police districts and at the target team office at police headquarters without ever having to divulge their names to police.

Sergeant John Colasanti, who coordinated the program for the police department, said "we tried to make it as convenient as possible" to give us a greater margin of success over previous buy back programs. "The main thing is that we get these guns off the streets because every gun we get off the streets is one less chance for a kid or someone to commit a robbery or murder. If this program saves one kid, it has been a success," Colasanti said.

The response was so tremendous that when the scheduled two-week amnesty ended the program was extended by an additional two weeks. The program ran for a period of one month from March 14th until April 14th. During that period a total of 311 firearms were surrendered to the police and a total of fifteen thousand nine hundred seventy five dollars (\$15,975.00) was distributed to



citizens who participated in the Gun Amnesty/Buy-Back program. Participants were paid \$25.00 for rifles, \$50.00 for a handgun and \$75.00 for an automatic handgun.

### A district by district breakdown shows:

North District	64 weapons	\$3,225.00
South District	77 weapons	\$3,875.00
East District	42 weapons	\$2,100.00
West District	88 weapons	\$4,300.00
T.A.R.G.E.T	30 weapons	\$2,275.00

The Citywide breakdown of the Amnesty/buy-back program shows that 69 rifles and shotguns, 168 pistols and revolvers, and 74 automatic handguns and assault weapons were turned in.

"This was the most successful program ever," Councilman Tucker said. "As opposed to the previous Gun Amnesty/ Buy-Back program which was a joint effort between the City and the County Prosecutor's office in which only 91 firearms were surrendered, the results of this effort clearly were much more substantial. Our City will be a little safer now that we have some of these weapons off the streets. This is the kind of program that is a

"win-win" situation for everyone concerned, the City, police and the residents. The bottom line here is that the residents of this City want positive results from their tax dollars and I don't think there is any question now that this program produces results," Tucker said.

Councilman Tucker is hopeful that even greater results will occur in future Gun Amnesty/Buy-Back programs. ■

## Branch Lauds Newark Student

(continued from page 4)

researches what he reads".

Councilman Branch notes that, "there is not enough positive information told about Black and Hispanic students, and Elvin Espinol is one exceptional student who should be noted for his leadership and self-motivation".

Ms. Bishop says, "Elvin is a true leader because whenever there is a problem he goes to mediate it, he is one of those students who never quits, he always tries to do better, and he also

encourages other students to work hard and is always willing to help others".

Outside of being academically talented, Elvin is also musically gifted. He plays the saxophone for the school band.

Ms. Bishop believes Elvin's family upbringing explains why he is such an applied and motivated student. She says, "his family is very supportive of his education, and they readily attend school functions and do not have a problem coming to the school for any

reason". In turn, "Elvin also shows his support by taking good care of his sister", she says.

Councilman Branch feels that we must honor and give special recognition to young people like Elvin, he says "if we don't honor our own, how can we expect others to honor and respect them". "I remain committed to discussing and promoting the positive things in our community and Elvin Espinol is one of our brightest stars". ■

## City of Newark Creates Centenarian Club

**N**ewark Councilman at Large Donald Tucker has sponsored legislation to create a "Centenarian Club" in the city of Newark, which will honor any Newark resident who reaches the century mark of one hundred (100) years old. "We fully realize the economic sacrifices and personal commitment which senior citizens in general and centenarians specifically have endured during their lives to remain as either homeowners or tenants in the city of Newark," says Councilman Tucker.

In order to pay a lasting tribute to those Newark residents who have been blessed by living to be 100 years of age or older, the Municipal Council has established a "Centenarian Club" with certain benefits and privileges to be afforded to its members. "All applicants to the Centenarian Club must submit proof of age and residency to the Municipal Council in order to become eligible members," said Tucker.

All members will be entitled to participate in a formal program which may provide a luncheon, floral arrange-



Newark Councilman Donald Tucker and Rev. John J. G. Ragin present the first Centenarian Club resolution to Ms. Fannie Lee Aliphant, a member of St. Luke's African Methodist Church.

ment, Municipal Council Community Service Medal and a Key to the City, as well as other gifts and citations which duly acknowledge their longevity.

Councilman Tucker feels that with

these acknowledgements we will in a very small way, begin to pay respect to these individuals who have been blessed by living to be 100 years of age or older. ■

### **The Newark City COUNCIL MONITOR**

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